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THE FOUNDING OF ST PETERSBURG.

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It must surely have struck most people who have journeyed over that interminable line of railway which extends in Russia from the frontier to the capital, that it is a thousand pities Peter the Great did not wait until he had so thoroughly thrashed the Swedes that he could establish his new metropolis within more reasonable distance of civilised Europe, say somewhere upon the shores of the Baltic, at Mitau or Riga. A glance at the map of Russia will show what a boon the great Peter would have conferred upon tourists in general by selecting one of the above-mentioned sites for his capital in place of the remote and inconvenient St Petersburg. The fact of the matter is, however, that Peter the Great was so exceedingly anxious to acquire a seaport of one kind or another in addition to his only available place of access to the sea, Archangel, that he was disposed to be too easily satisfied with his early triumphs over the armies of the then redoubtable Swede, and to settle himself finally where he first placed his foot upon the seashore. It is certain that when Peter gained a few early victories over Sweden he never supposed that he was destined to entirely overthrow his powerful neighbours, and to become the absolute master of the entire littoral of the Gulf of Finland and of the Baltic Provinces. Many a time during the long wars in which the two nations were engaged did he endeavour by every means to make peace upon terms infinitely less favourable than those eventually wrested from Sweden. Had he foreseen his ultimate triumphs, he might have selected at leisure a more convenient site for the city of St Petersburg, and I propose in this place to give a short sketch of the circumstances which led to the selection of this particular site.

Early in the autumn of 1702 the Great Tsar was in the very midst of his long war with the Swedes, and had, during the past year, achieved sundry notable successes against the armies of

Charles of Sweden, though the final tussle, which practically culminated at Pultowa, was still seven years distant in the future. General Sheremetieff's victories over Lippenbach in Livonia had been complete and decisive, and Peter imagined that he now saw his opportunity to deal a blow which he had long contemplated, and which would, if successful, give him that for which he was ready to risk the very existence of his empire; to attain which, indeed, he had already risked everything by embarking in this war with his powerful neighbours, the Swedes, generalled by their seemingly invincible young warrior, King Charles XII. Peter himself was, in August 1702, at Archangel, very busy building ships of war, when the news of Sheremetieff's latest success on 29th July, at Hummelshof, reached him. Down from the north came Peter with a small army, crossed Lake Onega, and floated down the River Svir to Lake Ladoga, where he found Sheremetieff with some thirteen thousand men awaiting him. Here the two joined forces, and attacked a Swedish fort situated upon a small island lying just in the neck of Lake Ladoga, where the River Neva flows out of the latter.

This island was called by the Swedes Nöteborg, and by the Russians 'Oryéchovo' ('made of nut'; the shape of the island being supposed to resemble a nut). A strong Swedish garrison held the fort, which was full of ladies and women generally, officers and soldiers alike being accompanied in their somewhat lonely outpost duty by their wives. These ladies sent a message to Peter, begging that they might be allowed to depart before hostilities began; they wished to go, they said, to the nearest Swedish town or stronghold in order to be out of danger. To this communication Peter returned a courteous reply; he could not think, he said, of allowing a company of unprotected ladies to travel without escort in these troublous times; they might go, certainly, if they wished, but he must insist upon their taking their husbands with them. The ladies, however, preferred to remain, and for three days their delicate ears were shocked and assailed by

the noise of much firing and fighting. After the third day, they adopted the advice of Peter the Tsar, and evacuated the dangerous place, taking their husbands with them. Thus Nöteborg and the upper waters of the Neva fell into the hands of the Russians, who promptly occupied and strengthened the place, and rechristened it *Schlüsselburg*, which is the name it bears to this day, and which name was given to it in recognition of the fact that this fort was the key to the Neva, which, again, was to be—if Peter could make it so—the window by which the Russia of the future should look out upon the sea.

Peter was much engaged at Voronej during the late autumn of 1702, keeping a watchful eye upon Turk and Tartar in the south, the while he prosecuted his operations in the extensive ship-building works he had set up there some years before, in preparation for his attack upon Azov in 1696. But in May 1703 he was free once more to take a further step towards the attainment of his great object: the establishment of a seaport on the shores of the Gulf of Finland.

Between him and the realisation of his ardent desires there now remained only the one small Swedish fortress of Nyenskanz on the Neva, some thirty miles lower than his newly acquired stronghold of Schlüsselburg. Nyenskanz lay exactly at the confluence of a small river, the Oclita, with the Neva at a point only a mile or two from the mouth of the latter, where it flows into and is lost, after its short career of some thirty miles, in the waters of the Finnish gulf. Nyenskanz was bombarded, and capitulated the next day, and then Peter found himself in actual possession of a seaport, and knew that, if only he could retain it, Russia should now look out into Europe through a first-floor window of her own; for Archangel was, after all, in the attics; Azov was of little use, and very precarious to hold (it was actually given back to the Turks not long afterwards), and the Caspian was no better than a lake. Russia could now fairly cherish the ambition to become, one day, a naval power, and to take her place with other European nations upon the seas that washed the fringes of the Continent. Peter was in ecstasy, and there were great doings and rejoicings in Moscow, which city did not recognise, as yet, that the capture of Nyenskanz had sounded her own death-knell as capital of the Russian empire. For Nyenskanz was rechristened Slotburg, and became before very long the nucleus of the St Petersburg of to-day. The Neva was captured not an hour too soon; for very shortly after the taking of Slotburg, the Russian garrison were surprised to hear cannon firing from the neck of the Gulf of Finland. The shots proved to be signals from a Swedish fleet arriving at the mouth of the Neva in blissful ignorance of the fact that the Swedish Nyenskanz was now the Russian Slotburg, and that the redoubtable Peter himself was in command thereof in place of the late Swedish general. Peter replied to the signals, however, as cordially as though he had indeed been the individual he was supposed to be, and was longing for the sight of Swedish faces after a year's lonely exile in this out-of-the-way corner of the world.

Up the Neva came sailing a deputation of two ships of the line, leaving the rest of the fleet in

the gulf, and anchored off Vassili-Ostrof—an island upon which now stands a large portion of the city of St Petersburg, but which was then, of course, a swampy, wooded desert inhabited by ducks and snipe, and perhaps, in the drier portions, by wolves and wood-game. And now Russia was to gain her first naval battle, if we may call it so.

Peter, with Menshikoff and others (the former now fast rising into his position of prime favourite of the Tsar, Lefort and Gordon both being dead), made, under cover of night, a careful survey of the two Swedish vessels lying in fancied security on Neva's placid bosom, and having formed their plans, returned to Slotburg, where a boat's crew sent up from the men-of-war had already been detained to the immense surprise of the Swedish sailors, who had expected a very different reception. Next morning Peter sent forward two regiments of the guards, packed into thirty large open boats which he commanded in person; this force reached the two Swedish vessels under cover of the islands, and succeeded in boarding them, and, after a sharp fight, in capturing both and returning up the river with them as far as Slotburg—the other five vessels taking fright by reason of the mysterious calamity which had befallen their companions, and escaping to sea.

Thus the Neva was now fairly in the hands of Peter the Tsar, and he was free to commence the building of his new metropolis. So far as the fortress was concerned, there was no difficulty whatever, and the work of rebuilding the fortifications at Slotburg was soon in full swing; but to cause a city to spring up around it was a very different affair. It was an inconvenient portion of the realm to settle down in, and nobody had the smallest wish to build houses in so remote and outlandish a spot. Nevertheless, by dint of moral pressure, some of Peter's loyal boyars were persuaded to pitch their tents by Neva's banks, and to put up with the inconveniences of living out of the reach of civilisation for awhile. Workmen were attracted to the place in thousands, and pile-driving and the building of wooden edifices were soon being busily prosecuted. There were material disadvantages other than those mentioned, with which these early inhabitants of St Petersburg were obliged to contend. For instance, there was the danger of being unexpectedly shelled by a Swedish fleet sailing up the Neva and opening fire without warning—for the war with Sweden went on for many a long year. Again, wolves prowled about the streets at night, and there were no policemen to direct them to move on or to prevent them committing a breach of the peace. Ten years after the commencement of the building of St Petersburg these savage creatures were still to be seen at large within the streets of the city.

It was not until the year 1718 that St Petersburg was proclaimed the capital of Russia. When the Tsar's decision was made public, the news caused the greatest possible dissatisfaction among Peter's old enemies, the priests, and the Old Russian party. The priests could never reconcile themselves to the Tsar's policy of progress and enlightenment, to which policy the party of the Old Russians were, from the first, no less bitterly opposed. Progress, said they, was not for Holy Russia, and was antagonistic to religion and the real interests of the most orthodox and holy

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nation in the world. The very idea of deserting Moscow, mother of a thousand churches and cathedrals, and of establishing another metropolis far away upon the banks of the Neva, was repugnant to the feelings of priest and Old Russian alike. But no opposition of priest or party ever interfered with the projects of this strong man armed, and in spite of tears and protests, and much perturbation of the national spirit, the transference of the seat of government from Moscow to St Petersburg became an accomplished fact; and from 1718 onwards the last-named city has been the capital of Russia. There is probably no part of the original St Petersburg of 1718 now standing, the entire city—fortress, cathedrals, private houses, senate—having in the first instance been built of wood. St Isaac's Cathedral has been rebuilt three or four times since those days. This beautiful edifice, it may be noted, is not dedicated to the patriarch Isaac, who is not a saint, but to St Isaac of Dalmatia, upon whose 'day' the great Peter happened to be born. The monastery of St Alexander Nefsky is called after another of the patrons of the city, which boasts of three tutelary saints, including St Peter. St Alexander Nefsky (St Alexander of the Neva) was a warrior-saint, and drove the Swedes from the banks of the Neva some centuries before Peter the Great performed the same feat, so that in re-establishing themselves in the place where the metropolis now stands, the Russians considered that they were but returning to their own; indeed, a notification to that effect was borne aloft, banner-wise, in the triumphal procession which accompanied Peter upon his entry into Moscow after those victories at Schlüsselburg and Slotburg, which placed the Neva in his hands and made St Petersburg possible.

MY LORD DUKE.*

CHAPTER VIII.—THE OLD ADAM.

OLIVIA said least. Her mother took Claude by the hand, and thanked him with real tears in her eyes, for after all she was an Irishwoman, who could be as emotional as possible when she chose. As for Mr Sellwood, he expressed himself as delightfully disappointed in the peer of whom he had heard so much. Jack struck him as being an excellent fellow, although not a golfer, which was a pity, and even apparently disinclined to take up the game—which might signify some recondit flaw in his character. So said the Home Secretary. But Olivia merely asked who had put all those roses in her room; and when Claude told her, she simply nodded, and took hardly any notice of the Duke that night. Nevertheless, she wore a handful of his flowers at her shapely waist. And she did thank him, in a way.

It was not the sweetest way in the world, as all her ways had been, these many weeks, in Jack's imagination. He was grieved and disappointed, but still more was he ashamed. He had taken a liberty. He had alienated his friend. Thus he

blamed himself, with bitter, wordless thoughts, and would then fall back upon his disappointment. His feelings were a little mixed. One moment she was not all that he had thought her; the next, she was more than all. She was more beautiful. Often he had tried to recall her face, and tried in vain, having seen her but once before, and then only for a few minutes. Now he perceived that his first impression, blurred and yet dear to him as it had been, had done but meagre justice to Olivia. He had forgotten the delicate dark eyebrows, so much darker than the hair. The girl's radiant colouring had likewise escaped him. It was like the first faint flush of an Australian dawn. Yet he had missed it in June, just as he had missed the liquid hazel of her eyes; their absolute honesty was what he remembered best; and, by a curious irony, that frank, fine look was the very one that she denied him now.

And so it was from the Friday evening, when the Sellwoods arrived, to the Monday morning when duty recalled the Home Secretary to St Stephen's. He obeyed the call in no statesmanlike frame of mind. He had spent the Sabbath in open sin upon the new-made links, and had been fitly punished by his own execrable play. The athletic agent had made an example of him; he felt that he might just as well have been in church (or rather in the private chapel attached to the Towers), reading the lessons for his son-in-law Francis Freke; and in the Saturday's 'four-some,' with the reverend gentleman on his side, the Cabinet minister had done little better. So he had departed very sorely against the grain, his white hairs bristling with discontent, a broken 'driver' hidden away in the depths of his portmanteau. And Olivia, seeing the last of him from amid the tall columns of the portico, felt heavy-hearted, because her father was also her friend.

Jack watched her at a distance. It did not occur to him that the girl's mother was already pitching him at the girl's head, daily and almost hourly, until she was weary of the very sound of his name. And though he felt he must have overstepped some mark in the matter of the flowers, he little dreamt how Miss Sellwood's maid had looked when she saw them, or what disgraceful satisfaction Lady Caroline had exhibited before her daughter on that occasion. He only knew that her Ladyship was treating him with a rather oppressive kindness, and that he would much sooner have had half-a-dozen words from Olivia, such as the first she had ever spoken to him.

And now the girl was unhappy; it was plain enough, even to his untutored eye; and he stepped forward with the determination of improving her spirits, without thinking of his own, which were not a little flat.

'You must find it dull up the country, Miss Sellwood, after London,' began Jack, not perhaps in his most natural manner. 'I—I wish to goodness you'd tell us of anything we could do to amuse you!'

'You are very good,' replied Olivia, 'but I don't

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require to be amused like a child. Thanks all the same. And as to finding the country dull, I never appreciate it so much as after a season in town.

She was not looking at the Duke, but beyond him, into the hall. And encountering no other eyes there, her own grew softer, as did her tone, even as she spoke.

'You know this old place off by heart, Miss Sellwood, I expect?' pursued Jack, who had taken off his straw hat in her presence, being in doubt as to whether the portico ranked indoors or out.

'Oh, well, I have stayed here pretty often, you know,' said Olivia. 'What do you think of the place?'

'I can't hardly say. I've never seen anything else like it. It's far too good, though, for a chap like me; it's all so grand.'

'I have sometimes felt it a little too grand,' the girl ventured to observe.

'So have I!' cried Jack. 'You can't think how glad I am to hear you say that. It's my own feeling right down to the ground!'

'I don't mean to be rude,' continued Olivia confidentially, seeing that they were still unobserved, 'but I have often felt that I wouldn't care to live here altogether.'

'No?' said the Duke, in a new tone; he felt vaguely dashed; but his manner was rather one of apologetic sympathy.

'No,' she repeated; 'shall you like it?'

'Can't say. I haven't weakened on it yet, though it is too fine and large for a fellow. Shall I tell you what I've done? I've fixed up a little place for myself outside, where I can go whenever I get full up of the homestead here. I wonder—if it isn't too much to ask—whether you would let me show you the little spot I mean?'

'Where is it?'

'In the pines yonder, on the far side o' the tank.'

'The tank?'

'We call 'em tanks in Australia. I meant the lake. I could row you across, Miss Sellwood, in a minute. If only you'd let me!' And he met her doubtful look with one of frank, simple-hearted, irresistible entreaty.

'Come on!' said Olivia suddenly; and as she went, she never looked behind; for she seemed to feel her mother's eyes upon her from an upper window, and the hot shame of their keen approval made her tingle from head to foot. So she trod the close, fine, sunlit grass as far as possible from her companion's side. And he, falling back a little, was enabled to watch her all the way.

Olivia was very ordinarily attired. She wore a crisp white blouse, speckled with tiny scarlet spots, and a plain skirt of navy blue, just short enough to give free play to the small brown shoes whose high heels the Duke had admired in the portico. Two scarlet bands, a narrow and a broad, encircled her straw hat and her waist, with much the same circumference; and yet this exceedingly average costume struck Jack as the most delicious thing imaginable of its kind. He corrected another impression before they reached the lake. Olivia was taller than he had thought; she was at least five-feet-six; and she carried her slim, trim figure in a fine upstanding fashion that

took some of the roundness out of his own shoulders as he noted it this August morning.

'It's the back-block bend,' he remarked elliptically, in the boat.

His way with the oars was inelegant enough, without a pretence at feathering; but it was quite effectual; and Olivia, in the stern-sheets, had her back still presented to the Argus-eyes of the Towers. She answered him with a puzzled look, as well she might, for he had done no more than think aloud.

'What is that?' she said. 'And what are the back-blocks; and what do you mean?' for her puzzled look had lifted on a smile.

'I was thinking of my round shoulders. You get them through being all your time in the saddle, up in the back-blocks. All the country in Riverina—that is, all the fenced country—is split up into ten-mile blocks. And the back-blocks are the farthest from the rivers and from civilisation. So that's why they call it the back-block bend; it came into my head through seeing you. I never saw anybody hold themselves so well, Miss Sellwood—if it isn't too like my cheek to say so!'

The keel grounded as he spoke, and Olivia, as he handed her out, saw the undulating battlements and toppling turrets of the olden pile upside-down in the tremulous mirror of the lake. A moment later the pine-trees had closed around her; and, sure enough, in a distant window, Lady Caroline Sellwood lowered her opera-glasses with a sigh of exceeding great contentment.

'So you haven't forgotten your old life yet,' said the girl, as they stepped out briskly across the shortening shadows of the pines. 'I wish you would tell me something about it! I have heard it said that you lived in ever such a little hut, away by yourself in the wilderness.'

'I did so; and in a clump of pines the dead spit of these here,' said Jack, with a relish. 'When I saw these pines you can't think how glad I was! They were like old friends to me; they made me feel at home. You see, Miss Sellwood, that old life is the only one I ever knew, bar this; often enough it seems the reallest of the two. Most nights I dream I'm out there again; last night, for instance, we were lamb-marking. A nasty job, that; I was covered with blood from head to heels, and I was just counting the poor little beggars' tails, when one of the dead tails wriggled in my hand, and blowed if it wasn't Livingstone's! No, there's no forgetting the old life; I was at it too long; it's this one that's most like a dream.'

'And the hut,' said Olivia, with a rather wry face; 'what sort of a place was that?'

'I'll show you,' replied the Duke, in what struck the other as a superfluously confidential tone. 'It was a little bit of a place, all one room, with a galvanised iron roof and mother-earth for floor. It was built with the very pines that had been felled to make a clearing for the hut: so many uprights, and horizontal slabs in between. A great square fireplace and chimney were built out at one end, like the far end of a church; and over my bunk I'd got a lot of pictures from the *Australasian Sketcher* just stuck up anyhow; and if you weren't looking, you knocked your head against the ration-bags that hung from the

cross-beams. You slept inside, but you kept your bucket and basin on a bench'—

'Good heavens!' cried Olivia. And she stood rooted to the ground before a clearing and a hut that answered accurately to the Duke's description. The hut was indeed too new, the maker's stamp catching the eye on the galvanised roofing; and, in the clearing, the pine-stumps were still white from the axe; but the essentials were the same, even to the tin basin on the bench outside the door, with a bucket of water underneath. As for the wooden chimney, Olivia had never seen such a thing in her life; yet real smoke was leaking out of it into the pale blue sky.

'Is this a joke or a trick?' asked the girl, looking suspiciously on Jack.

'Neither; it's meant for the dead image of my old hut up the bush; and it's the little place I've fixed up for myself, here on the run, that I wanted to show you.'

'You've had it built during these last few weeks?'

'Under my own eye; and bits of it with my own hand. Old Claude thought it sheer cussedness, I know; perhaps you will, too; but come in, and have a look for yourself.'

And unlocking the padlock that secured it, he opened the door and stood aside for the young girl to enter. Olivia did so with alacrity; her first amazement had given way by now to undiluted interest; and the Duke followed her, straw hat in hand. There was a tantalising insufficiency of light within. Two small windows there were, but both had been filled with opaque folds of sackcloth in lieu of glass; yet the Duke pointed to them, as might his ancestors to the stained-glass lights in chapel and library, with peculiar pride; and, indeed, his strange delight in the hut, who cared so little for the Towers close at hand, made Olivia marvel when she came to think about it. Meanwhile she found everything as she had heard it described in the Australian hut, with one exception: there were no nation-bags to knock one's head against, because nobody made meals here. Also the pictures over the bunk were from the *Illustrated London News*, not from the *Sketcher*, which Jack had been unable to obtain in England; and they were somewhat unconvincingly clean and well-arranged. But the bunk itself was all that it might have been in the real bush; for it was covered over with Jack's own old blanket; whereon lay a purring, yellow ball, like a shabby sand-bank in a sea of faded blue.

'So this is Livingstone!' exclaimed the girl, stooping to scratch that celebrity's head.

'Yes; and there's old Tom and Black Maria in front of the fire. I lock them all three up during the day, for it isn't so like the bush in some ways as it is in others. They might get stolen any day, with so many people about; that's the worst of the old country; there was no other camp within five miles of me, on Carara.'

'It must have been dreadfully lonely!'

'You get used to it. And then every few months you would tramp into the homestead and—speak to the boss,' said Jack, changing his mind and his sentence as he remembered how he had once shocked Claude Lafont.

Olivia took notice of the cats, at which Jack

stood by beaming. The kitten she had brought down from town in a basket. It lived in Olivia's room, but she now suggested restoring it to its own people. Jack, however, reminded her that it was hers, in such a tender voice, and proceeded to refer to her kindness at their first meeting, in so embarrassing a fashion, that the girl, seeking a change of subject, found one in the long, low bunk.

'I see,' said she, 'that you come here for your afternoon siesta.'

'I come here for my night's sleep,' he replied.

'Never!'

'Every night in life. You seem surprised. I did ask old Claude not to mention it—and—oh, well, it's no use keeping the thing a secret, after all! It suits me best—the open country and the solitude. It's what I'm accustomed to. The wind in the pines all around, I wake up and hear it every night, just like I did in the old hut. It's almost the same thing as going back to the bush to sleep; there's not two penn'orth of difference.'

'You'd like to go back altogether,' said the girl, affirming it as a fact; and yet her sweet eyes, gravely unsatisfied, seemed to peer through his into his soul.

'I don't say that, Miss Sellwood,' he protested.

'Of course it's a great thing for me to have come in for all this fortune and power—and it'll be a greater thing still once I can believe it's true! That's the trouble. The whole show's so like a dream. And that's where this little hut helps me; it's real, anyway; I can sight it. As for all the rest, it's still just a few too many for me; what's more, if I was to wake up this minute on Carara I shouldn't so very much mind.'

'I wonder,' said Olivia, with her fine eyes looking through him still. 'I just wonder!' And her tone set him wondering too.

'Of course,' he faltered, 'I should be mighty sorry to wake up and find I'd only dreamt you!'

'Of course,' she returned, with a laughing bow; but there had been an instant's pause; and she was studying the picture gallery over the bunk when she added: 'I see you've been long enough in England to acquire the art of making pretty speeches. And I must tell you at once that they never amuse me. At least,' she added more kindly, again facing him, 'not when they come from a person as a rule so candid as yourself.'

'But you mistake me; I was perfectly candid,' protested poor Jack.

'It won't do,' said the girl. 'And it's time we went.'

Olivia felt that she had made excellent friends with the Duke, that the more she saw of him the better she would probably like him, and that she could possibly be of use to him in little ways, if he would be sensible, and make no more than a friend of her. She was not so sure of him, however, as she could have wished; and she was anxious to leave well alone. It was thus the worst of luck that at this last moment she should perceive the suggestively white bouquet upon the high deal chimney-piece.

'You've been to a wedding,' she cried, 'and I've never heard a word about it! Whose was the wedding? Some of the tenantry, of course, or the bride would hardly have presented you with her bouquet!'

And she reached it down, and widened her pretty nostrils over the fading flowers; but they smelt of death; and their waxy whiteness had here and there the tarnish of a half-eaten apple.

'There was no bride,' said Jack, 'and no wedding.'

'Then what's the history of this? No! I beg your pardon; it isn't a fair question.'

'It is; perfectly. I had it made for a young lady. The head-gardener made it, but I told him first what I wanted. There was no word of a wedding; I only thought a nosegay would be a nice sort of thing to give a young lady, to show her she was mighty welcome; and I thought white was a nice clean sort of colour. But it turned out I was wrong; she wouldn't have liked it; it would only have made her uncomfortable; so, when I found out that, I just let it rest.'

'I see,' said Olivia, seeing only too clearly. 'Still, I'm not sure you were right: if I had been the girl'—

'Yes?'

The quick word altered the speech it had also interrupted.

'I should have thought it exceedingly kind of you,' said Olivia, after a moment's reflection.

She replaced the flowers on the chimney-board, and then led the way out among the pines.

'I'm sorry you were in such a hurry,' he said, overtaking her when he had locked up the hut. 'I might have made you some billy-tea. The billy's the can you make it in up the bush. I had such a work to get one over here! I keep some tea in the hut, and billy-tea's not like any other kind; I call it better; but you must come again and sample it for yourself.'

'We'll see,' said Olivia smilingly; but with that she lost her tongue; and together they crossed the lake in mutually low spirits. It was as though the delicate spell of simple friendship had been snapped as soon as spun between them, and the friends were friends no more.

On the lawn, however, in a hammock under an elm, they found a young man smoking. It was Mr Edmund Stubbs, who had arrived, with his friend the Impressionist, on the Saturday afternoon. He was smoking a pipe; but the ground beneath him was defiled with the ends of many cigarettes; and close at hand a deck-chair stood empty.

'I smell the blood of Mr Llewellyn,' said Olivia, coming up with the glooming Duke. 'He smokes far too many cigarettes!'

'He has gone for more,' said the man in the hammock.

'I wonder you don't interfere, Mr Stubbs; it must be so bad for him.'

'On the contrary, Miss Sellwood, it is the best thing in the world for him. A man must smoke something. And an artist must smoke cigarettes. You can tell what he does smoke, however, from his work. Pipe-work—in an artist—is ever coarse, banal, incredibly obvious, and only fit to hang in the front parlours of Brixton and Upper Tooting. Cigar-work is little better; but that of the cigarette is delicate, suggestive, fantastic if you will, but always artistic. Ivor Llewellyn's is cigarette-work.'

'How very interesting!' said Olivia.

'My colonial!' muttered the Duke.

At the same time they caught each other's eyes, turned away with one consent, nor made a sound between them until they were out of earshot of that hammock. And then they only laughed; yet the spell that had been broken was even thus made whole.

THE ASPEN AND ITS USES.

HOW MATCHES ARE MADE.

VARIABLE as may be the shade by the light-quivering aspen made, the wood of the aspen has come to occupy an important place in a very considerable modern industry. In the manufacture of matches this wood has become indispensable, because of certain natural properties—its large structure, ready combustibility, freedom from knots, and uniformity of substance. Many other woods are used in match-making, such as pine, poplar, linden, and birch; but, on the Continent especially, aspen is the favourite, because of the qualities we have mentioned and of the ease with which it can be worked. But it is only since 'Paraffin' and 'Safety' matches came into vogue that the value of the aspen was fully recognised. In the case of sulphur matches it is not necessary for the wood to absorb the composition for ignition; but when paraffin is used instead of sulphur, a porous wood is indispensable. The reason for this is that unless the paraffin penetrates into the wood, the matches will stick together, and the paraffin will become fluid again, even in moderate temperature. Thus, when safety-matches came to be made, a wood had to be sought that was light and spongy, and at the same time pleasing in appearance. Poplar was tried; but it is brittle, and is, moreover, too gray in colour. Birch, it was found, is apt to turn yellow, and it is not often procurable in large logs. Both poplar and birch, too, are slow in combustion; and in the case of 'safeties' rapid ignition is required. Pine and fir are readily combustible, but contain so much natural resin as to be unable to absorb much paraffin. And so it came about that aspen was selected, and something like a scramble for aspen wood began in Europe, and has become so severe that in Russia, Germany, and France state-aid has had to be invoked for the protection of the forests and the regulation of growth and exportation of this tree.

There is something more than an industrial interest in this introduction of the aspen among the common objects of the household. It was out of this wood, from which the commonplace match is made, that, according to tradition, the Cross of our Saviour was constructed; and the tree was so smitten with shame at the part it played in the Divine Tragedy that it has trembled ever since. A German legend gives another explanation of the quivering of the aspen. During the flight of Mary and Joseph into Egypt they came at night to a thick

forest, whereupon all the trees, with the sole exception of the aspen, began to pay reverence to the Holy Child. This disrespect on the part of the aspen was observed by Christ, who in consequence pronounced a curse against it; whereupon its leaves began to tremble, and have trembled ever since.

It is probably on the homeopathic principle that in old folk-medicine a decoction of aspen leaf was held to be an infallible specific for ague.

The Russians have a tradition that Judas Iscariot hanged himself on an aspen, and that that is why the leaves quiver. And the Buddhists say that the leaves are agitated out of respect for Buddha. The most widespread belief in Europe, however, was that the aspen was shamed for ever for having supplied the beam of the Cross.

Shakespeare's simile of the lily-hands that tremble like aspen leaves upon the lute and make the silken strings delight to kiss them, is pretty enough, but the association of the fair sex with the tree is not always complimentary. Honest Mistress Quickly might shake 'an 'twere an aspen leaf' at the very thought of 'swaggerers,' yet the aspen has from ancient times been the emblem of the restlessness of woman. It was otherwise known as 'Quick-beam;' and of it Gerard, the old Herbalist, remarks: 'In English, Aspe and Aspen tree may also be called Tremble, after the French name, considering it is the matter whereof women's tongues were made, which poets and some others report, *which seldom cease wagging*.'

There is another thing about the aspen—its claims of long descent. It belongs, like the Scotch fir, to one of the oldest families in the forest world. Indeed it was one of the primeval trees of Europe, and long centuries before it nestled in the match-box has rustled in the hedgerows when other leaves were motionless. And in mediæval times the wood must have been highly prized for some purposes, for an Act was passed in the reign of Henry V. to forbid the consumption of aspen except for the making of arrows, and enacting a penalty of one hundred shillings from all who should use it in the making of clogs and pattens. What other uses it had one can hardly enumerate now; but in Spenser's time it was certainly considered good for staves; and in later times it has found favour both for the panelling of rooms and the making of gunpowder.

In Russia (where, as we now see, a new use has been found for it) the aspen has for long been associated with witchcraft. It was (and perhaps still is) held that when a witch died a piece of aspen wood ought to be placed in her grave to keep her from carrying on her evil work after death. Do the Russian peasants, one wonders, see nothing of witchcraft in the lucifer match made out of aspen wood?

As to who first invented the friction-match—for so long known as the 'lucifer'—accounts differ. Like many great inventions, this seems

to have evolved from more than one source. Some forty years ago there died at Stockton-on-Tees an apothecary named John Walker, on whose behalf it has been claimed that he was the real inventor, though he considered the thing so trifling that he would not take out a patent for it. The story goes that, in or about 1827, Walker was preparing some lighting mixture in his shop for his own use. He had dipped a splint into the mixture, and it afterwards fell on the hearth and was accidentally rubbed violently against the stone. It ignited, and at once gave the idea to Walker of the friction-match. He carried out the idea by selling matches in boxes, on the side of which he fastened a piece of doubled sand-paper; the flaming being produced by a pressure of the thumb and a sharp pull of the match between the papers. These matches were sold at the price of one shilling per box of fifty, so that if the sale was small, the profit must have been large.

Another claimant is Isaac Holden, the son of a pitman at Nitshill, near Glasgow. The pitman was a thrifty Cumberland man who was able to give his son a good education, and Isaac eventually became classical master and lecturer on chemistry (queer combination) at an academy in Reading. There he had to get up early for his studies, and was much bothered with the flint and steel, until one morning he had what he called a happy thought. 'Of course I knew,' he told a Committee of the House of Commons inquiring into the patent laws, 'as other chemists did, the explosive material that was necessary in order to produce instantaneous light; but it was very difficult to obtain a light on wood by the explosive material, and the idea occurred to me to put sulphur under the explosive mixture. I did that, and published it in my next lecture and showed it. There was a young man in the room whose father was a chemist in London, and he wrote to his father about it, and shortly afterwards lucifer matches were issued to the world.'

Isaac Holden (now Sir Isaac) believed he was the first inventor, but, like Walker, he regarded the thing as too trifling to be worth the trouble and expense of taking out a patent. But this class-lecture of Holden's was in 1829, whereas Walker's match was on sale in 1827.

We have explained why the aspen wood is peculiarly adapted for the paraffin match. Another quality it possesses is in being very flakable, and flaking is necessary to keep the wood porous and to work it to the greatest advantage. To flake the wood a knife is made to revolve round a log rotating on its own axis. Then the flakes are cut into ribbons of the thickness and width of the match to be manufactured, and these ribbons are laid in even layers and cut into square splints. It is a characteristic of the aspen to preserve uniformity in its annual 'rings' of growth, and, therefore, the ribbons or splints into which the wood is cut are perfectly uniform, which is not the case with many other woods. Then the absence of grain in aspen wood permits of flaking into very thin shavings, which are made into match-boxes, and this gives it additional value, since

the material for both match and box can be produced by the same machine from the same wood. Fir and pine cannot be manipulated so easily to produce this double result, because the annual 'rings' of growth in them differ a good deal in thickness, and the knife is apt to slip in cutting the ribbons. It is said of aspen wood that all the ribbons from one log will be practically identical.

In selecting wood match-manufacturers require pieces free from rotten pith and knots, straight, and of loose texture. The aspen is considered suitable for match-making when the trunk has attained a diameter of eight inches; but those of from ten to twenty inches diameter are best. The size of the trunk is no exact index to age, as the rapidity of growth varies with soil and other conditions; but, as a rule, trees of from twenty to thirty-five years old are preferred to younger growths; and at these ages the tree should yield the smallest proportion of waste.

According to recent official returns, the match-factories of Germany use about five million cubic feet of aspen wood annually, of which about three and a half million cubic feet are imported from Russia. These factories are situated in Silesia, Pomerania, Sleswick-Holstein, Bavaria, the Rhine Provinces, Alsace-Lorraine, and the Duchy of Anhalt. The Silesian factories depend mostly on the Silesian woods, and on Poland, Galicia, and Hungary. There are numerous forests in Silesia, but each forest only provides a few loads of aspen per annum. This makes it difficult and expensive to collect supplies. A cubic metre of aspen wood costs from seventeen to twenty-five shillings delivered at the railway station nearest to the forest, the price varying with the diameter; and it can be brought into Silesia as cheaply from Poland and Hungary as from the Silesian forests.

The Pomeranian factories are supplied chiefly from Riga, Libau, Windau, and St Petersburg. To these ports the wood is brought down from the mountain forests in rafts when the snows melt in the spring. It is in suitable logs of from sixteen to twenty-three feet in length. Russian aspen is imported through Königsberg, Danzig, Flensburg, Lübeck, Amsterdam, Stettin, Antwerp, and Bremen. In Anhalt some aspen is grown, but the factories have to import Russian wood also. In Westphalia it is almost entirely Russian wood that is used, imported *via* Amsterdam and taken thence by rail.

Owing to the growing demand for it, and the decrease of other sources of supply, the price of Russian aspen is increasing annually. So serious is the prospect considered in Germany that several Chambers of Commerce and other bodies have petitioned the government to take vigorous action and to order some strict and systematic attention to be paid in the forests to the growth of the aspen. In France there is a similar agitation; while in Russia the match-manufacturers want their government to prohibit the exportation of aspen wood altogether, so that they may have the whip-hand over their German and French competitors. It is now suggested that America should come into the field and supply the match-makers of Europe with aspen wood,

which is said to abound in the United States, and to be at present little used there. Such is the interesting industrial position of a tree with a strange history and curious attributes.

PHIL'S PARD.

CHAP. II.—JIM ANNERSLEY, OF CARVILLE.

THE news of Phil's projected absence and the reason for it came as a third shock to Plummer's that day.

'A new pard! An' you're streakin' it through all these yer murderin' Injuns to Cruz to meet him!—You don't say, Phil?' gasped one.

'I do say,' returned Phil warmly, for once vouchsafing to descend to something akin to everyday loquacity. 'When my late pard, Haliday, passed in his chips, the last words he says to me was, "Phil, hand over my pile to my cousin, Jim Annnersley of Carville," or words to that effect. Wall, I reckon I wrote to this yer Annnersley, an' put the thing squar' to him. "Here's Haliday's pile," says I. "Come out an' fetch it ef you're real grit. Moreover, thar's Haliday's share in the claim. I wanter do the fair thing, an' ef you air purty hefty, an' kin hump yerself, an' I cotton to you an' you cotton to me, then I reckon I'll hev you for my pard." An' this yer Annnersley writes back—which I got his letter this mornin'—an' after ladlin' out two or three pages of hogwash 'bout thanks an' gratitude, an' cetera, an' cetera, he says—he says—wall, I guess I can't reck'lect the *precise* words, cos he 'pears to be a powerful high-toned cuss at shovin' a pen, but what he means ter say is thet he's on it—jest that—an will start for Plummer's next day, which is to say, thet he'll be dumped down by the stage to-morrow at Cruz, right in the middle of a Injun scare, with forty miles of a desert trail atween him an' here!'

'But you ain't goin' alone, air you, Phil? I calkerlate one man ain't of much account for fightin' Injuns!' remarked Hank Potter.

'I ain't layin' to fight no Injuns—I'm goin' to show a tenderfoot how to keep outen their tracks,' replied Phil. 'I've arsked this yer Annnersley to come out, an' I'm goin' to stand by him through this yer danger ef it is one. Ez for you, all you have to do is to throw out scouts, an' keep yer eyes skinned agen a surprise party, an' ef you air attacked, stand the varmint off till the troops come up.'

Seventy-three out of the seventy-five total population of Plummer's (said population being exclusively male) returned to Tillipier's Bar accompanied by the half-breed, Lorenzo; and having appointed Hank Potter Brevet Commander-in-Chief, pending Phil's return from Cruz, at once dispersed to look up arms, after which scouts were sent out and hasty preparations made for barricading the camp.

Surly Tim lingered behind, for he had still something to say, and it did not take him long to say it.

'Which it 'pears to me,' he began as usual, 'that you hev showed yourself to-day, Phil, the whitest, rattiest galoot west of the Rockies, an' I don't keer a continental whar the next comes. I ain't much of a hand at makin' friends, but I like a man of your heft; an' when I like a man I freeze

to him. Phil, you air a bully boy with a glass eye, an' I'm goin' along of you to help fetch this yer new pard of yourn from Cruz. Put it thar!' he concluded, holding out a huge grimy paw. And Phil put it there, and a sense of strong, honest confidence passed from heart to heart over the connection formed by that hearty handshake.

Early the following morning the mail-carrier's mount being refreshed by its night's rest, Phil, Tim, and Lorenzo, mounted on wiry mustangs, were galloping swiftly over the sun-dried, dusty plains for Cruz. The station of Pueblo de la Cruz—popularly known in its abbreviated form—was the lonely habitation of a Mexican, called Luis—nobody knew what else—who preferred to live on the scanty subsidy granted him by the Stage Company, and the plunder, in the shape of charges, to be got out of the stray visitors the stage put down there, which left him at liberty to indulge his national indolence by smoking cigarettes all day, and singing

'Soy purita mejicana;
Nada tengo español

to his guitar in the everlasting sunshine; he preferred all this, I say, to drudging in the mines, or rounding-up beef on the ranches, for, in the words of his song, Luis was 'pure Mexican,' and had therefore a soul above physical labour.

The station, which took its name from the ruins of an ancient pueblo near, as do so many places in South California, Arizona, and New Mexico, was an adobe building with a shed for the stage cattle behind. The only other regular inhabitants beside the proprietor being an Indian boy and the half-breed, Lorenzo, it was not a particularly desirable residence when the Apaches were out on the warpath, for, as Surly Tim cynically observed, 'Hanky-pankyin' on a git-ar ain't of much account fur fightin' of Injuns.'

As, late in the afternoon, the three travellers rode their jaded beasts up the trail to the station, Luis, resplendent in a crimson silk sash, natty blue jacket with silver buttons, and gorgeous silver ear-rings, was lolling on a bench by the door of the building, singing the refrain of some Mexican serenade, as he strummed the strings of his guitar.

'Say, Luis! stage in?' inquired Phil, springing off his mustang.

The Mexican nodded affirmatively, and went on with his singing.

'Was thar a tenderfoot sot down here—a young innocent from down East of the name of Jim Annersley, ez might ha' been inquiren' for Philip Marpleson, Esquire, of Plummers?'

Luis nodded again.

'Then whar the thunder is he? You ain't let him streak it by himself across the desert with Arrow Nose skirmishin' round the trail? 'Cos ef you hev'—'

'No, no!' replied Luis quickly; 'Jim Annersley's in there, asking for milk an' crackers,' and he indicated the room on the right of the entrance.

'Milk and crackers!' echoed Phil. 'Lordy, Tim! I've hed some mighty gaw experiences in my time, but this yer lays over all! Durn my pesky old hide ef ever I thought I'd hev to dry-nuss a young Eastern jay on milk an' crackers

till I could git him home to his mammy agen! Howsomever, I'll jest chip in an' prospect him.'

'Bueno!' muttered Luis, and his mouth widened into an expansive grin that showed his white teeth, as his fingers strayed over the strings, feeling for the right chord to echo the laugh of his voice; and Phil disappeared into the building.

A moment elapsed—only one—and then Phil came flying out again in a hurry, hatless and breathless. His face was as pale as his sunburnt skin could possibly permit it, and his eyes started from their sockets as though he had seen a ghost. Utter surprise; abject, helpless misery; cowardly, despondent fear, were in turn depicted on his face, chasing one another over his usually immovable features like a procession of dissolving views. He who had faced death in a score of horrible forms without flinching a muscle or turning a hair, had been utterly, unequivocally frightened by the appearance of a young tenderfoot.

Surly Tim stared, open-eyed and open-mouthed, and scratched his head in dire wonder at the sight of what he would hitherto have staked his pile was a sheer impossibility—Philossifer Phil in a fluster!

'Which it 'pears to me, Phil, you air skeered!' he observed at length.

Phil gripped his companion's arm convulsively with one hand, while he wiped the sweat from his brow with his other sleeve. Then he gave one hurried, fearful glance in the direction of the room from which he had so precipitately retreated, and gasped, in a hoarse whisper:

'I'm eternally flummoxed! This yer Annersley— Say, Tim, was you ever hugged by a b'ar till you heared yer own bones crunchin' in yer body like ore in a crusher? D'y'er know what it is ter see a lot of Apaches lightin' up a fire, knowin' thet fire was to roast the livin' flesh offen you? Wall, them things ain't in it fur obfuscatin' a man like this. Tim, this yer Jim Annersley's a petticoat! an' thet's what laid me out!'

'A petticoat!' ejaculated Surly Tim.

'Ay, a gal, you can bet yer gum boots on thet!'

'Which it seems to me, Phil, this yer job hed better be liquidated. Let's liquor!'

'You kin go in with Luis and pisen yerself, Tim, an' I'll jine yer presently; but jest now I've got to wrastle with this yer onusual situation,' Phil replied lugubriously. And so the two disappeared through the door, and, Lorenzo having long before led the horses off, the philosopher was left alone to 'wrastle.'

It was a hard nut to crack. As he sat with his eyes fixed on the ground, trying to get to the kernel of it, a tall, fair girl stepped lightly across the threshold, and placed one white shapely hand on his shoulder. Phil looked up, and his troubled gaze met the laughing blue eyes of Jim Annersley.

'I am afraid my mad freak has rather taken you by surprise, Mr Marpleson,' she said, in a low sweet voice. 'I thought it would.'

'An' I calkerlate it hee!'

'You see, Mr Marpleson, my proper name is Jemima, but I was always—'

'Scuse me, miss,' interrupted Phil solemnly; 'Ef you'll jest hold yer hosses—I beg pardon, I mean ef you'll jest 'scuse my absence fur a few

minutes, I'll git yer drift a little c'larer,' and he bolted hurriedly into the room which served upon occasion as a bar.

'Tim, jest call me "Mister Marpleson" fur a spell until I git sorter accustomed to it. It ruther throws me off when this gal "mister's" me.'

'Thar!' he resumed, as he rejoined Miss Annersley; 'yer kin jest toot yer horn now, an' mebbe I'll be able to tumble!'

'I—I'm afraid I don't quite understand what you mean?'

'Wall, you see, you ain't accustomed to the climate yet, an' I ain't jest what you might call a lady's man. Howsomever, what I mean is, jest you ladle out what you've got to say, an' I'll try to ketch on.'

'Oh! Well, you see, Mr Marpleson, my real name being *Jemima*, my father got into the way of calling me *Jim*, and, somehow, the abbreviation stuck to me. I was always known as *Jim* among my acquaintances—and everybody is acquainted in a little place like *Carville*. Since father died, I've been the book-keeper in the store at *Carville*. When you sent me that letter about poor cousin *Harry*, and about my coming out West if I was real grit, it was all so plain that you were under the impression that I was a man, and it was so tedious being chained to a desk all day entering up accounts of cheeses and hardware, and—and I was, rather annoyed by a fat, red-haired Irish grocery man who would persist in making love to me, that I just jumped at the chance of a trip to *Arizona*. It was such a splendid idea—real fun! I thought I'd just let you see that an *Illinois* girl *was* real grit. So I just took a month's holiday, and here I am; and now you're real mad because I did as you suggested, Mr Marpleson.'

'Now, you're off it—c'lar off it,' Phil replied, with something like his old composure. 'I ain't mad—only flummoxed; but I reckon we'll strike the right lead ef we only sink fur enough.'

'But why are you "flummoxed," as you call it, Mr Marpleson?' she went on. 'I should be sorry to think that an old friend of cousin *Harry's* had been seriously inconvenienced by the madcap whim of a wilful girl! Pray forgive me for playing my little trick on you, and help me enjoy my little adventure. I want to see *Plummer's*, so that I can say I have seen a real mining camp, and then, when you and I have transacted our little business, I shall go back to *Carville* and brag about it all my life.'

'I'm afeard you can't git to *Plummer's* this trip.'

'What's to hinder me?'

'Injuns!'

The girl's face turned a trifle pale, and the mirth died out of her laughing eyes, giving place to a look of deep anxiety.

'Then there *is* some truth in it after all, and they told me on the stage it was only a foolish report, and that the men with guns who rode along with us were only there for appearance sake, to pacify the fears of the passengers,' she faltered.

'Then, I reckon they was playin' it off on yer,' replied Phil serenely. 'Anyhow, your best game is to stop jest whar' you are until the stage goes through back agen in three days, when you will be pretty safe with an armed escort, an' I'll send on *Haliday's* pile to *Carville*.'

'Where were the Indians when you last heard of them?' she asked.

'Comyn's Ranch.'

'And how far is that?'

'Fifty miles from here, and thirty from *Plummer's*.'

'Then I'm going to *Plummer's*!' Miss *Annersley* remarked, quietly yet determinedly.

'Which it 'pears to me,' observed *Surly Tim*, who had come out of the station and overheard the latter portion of the conversation, in undisguised admiration—'which it 'pears to me, miss, that fur a petticoat you air a rustler! Put it thar!' and when she acted upon his entreaty, he gazed on the little, soft, white hand that lay in his huge, dirty fist, and did not know what to do with it.

'You kin ride?' inquired *Phil*.

Jim nodded, and shook a wisp of yellow hair out of its bondage beneath her hat across her pretty freckled forehead.

Phil looked up and down her round lithe figure as she stood before him, gracefully swaying to and fro to the rhythm of *Luis's* guitar from within. Then his eyes met hers, and they looked at each other for some seconds.

'What are you thinking about now, Mr Marpleson? *Luis's* singing, eh?' she asked at length.

'No; *Luis's* trousers.'

'*Luis's* trousers! What?'

'I've jest been chawin' it over, an' it 'pears to me that a pair of 'em would fit you purty well.'

In an instant the colour of hot indignation surged to her face, and drawing herself majestically to her full height, she demanded, with a quivering lip:

'Is it generous—is it manly to insult a lone woman!'

'That ain't it,' replied *Phil*; 'the question afore this yer meetin' is: How air you goin' to ride forty miles over a rough trail in a Mexican saddle—and, mebbe, hev to ride fur yer life—unless you?'

'I won't hear you! I won't listen another minute to your cowardly insults!' she interrupted passionately; and with one stamp of her foot, she turned, and disappeared through the door-way.

Phil sat silently for some time, then turning to *Surly Tim*, he remarked philosophically:

'I calkerlate human natur' in a gal is jest like a deposit in a gold claim—you can't reckon it up. Jest when you think you hev struck it rich, you come to a fault or bed-rock; an' jest when you think the claim's played out, and ain't worth shucks, you strike a jeweller's shop. Human natur,' he continued thoughtfully, 'is like a hand at poker—when you see a man chip to fill, or go one better, you kin reckon thet he lies some keerds in his hand thet he sots some store on, an' yet he ain't sartin to rake in the pool; but when thar's a gal in the game, it's cut-throat euchre without trumps, an' the right bower up somebody's sleeve!'

'Which it 'pears to me you air 'bout c'reck. An' now, I'll jest prospect round a bit an' see ef the coast's c'lar,' remarked *Surly Tim*; and, as he suited the word to the action, *Phil* was left alone to ruminate on human nature and the exigencies of the present situation.

It was just on the point of sundown, and *Surly Tim* had not returned from his self-imposed

scouting expedition, when Miss Jemima Annersley stole softly to Phil's side, and sat down beside him.

'Forgive me, Mr Marpleson !' she began, in a low tone, with no trace of resentment in it; 'I was hasty. I can see it all now. You were right, and I was wrong. This is no place for a weak, helpless woman. I will do as you wish—stay here until the stage returns, and then go straight back to Carville. You—you don't think the Indians are likely to attack us here? Oh, I thought I was a brave, heroic woman to come out here alone; and now I know I'm only a foolish, wilful girl.' The last words came with a sob, and finished in a shower of tears.

Phil shifted uneasily on his seat. Being entirely foreign to the ways of women, he was greatly affected by her weeping.

'You—you don't think, miss, you could mebbe jest shut off them hydraulics! 'Cos thar ain't no need to be skeered permiscus-like. Ef thar is anything you want, give it a name, an' I'll make that Mexican greaser, Luis, git it you. Thar's no danger to-night, for Injuns don't fight in the dark, so you kin turn in an' sleep ez comfortable ez ef you was a babby in yer mother's arms. Ez fur anything else—wall, I reckon Surly Tim an' me's here to look after you, an' Injuns or no Injuns, we'll see you safe on the stage agen, s'elp me !'

The girl gave him one swift glance; then, seized by a sudden impulse, she took his horny hand in hers, and pressed a hasty kiss of gratitude upon it.

'I think I'm beginning to understand you better now,' she murmured, and turning quickly, she vanished.

That night, while Surly Tim snored peacefully on the bunk in the room allotted to them, Philosopher sat watching the stars by the window as he nursed his repeating-rifle until well on to dawn, when Surly Tim took his place, and he lay down, and once Tim heard him mumble :

'A fat, red-haired, Irish grocery man !'

You see Philip Marpleson was beginning to take a strong interest in Jim Annersley—as any big-hearted man of thirty-eight might take an interest in a pretty, wilful, unprotected girl of twenty.

JOHN THOMSON OF DUDDINGSTON.

THE ARTIST OF THE MANSE.

THE ranks of Scottish literature have been largely recruited from 'sons of the manse,' and the world has recently been kept pretty well informed of that fact; but it is not so generally known that art, too, has found a home beneath the minister's roof.

John Thomson, who in his day was deemed by many the equal of Turner as a landscape-painter, and who must still be assigned a foremost place among Scottish artists, was not only a 'son of the manse,' but a minister to boot. His father was minister of the Ayrshire parish of Dailly; his grandfather and great-grandfather were both ministers. He came, therefore, of a clerical race, and whence the artistic strain in him was derived no one could guess. But there it was, and it soon

showed itself; for, before the lad was in his teens, he had begun to adorn, or, as his mother thought, deface, the white walls of the Ayrshire manse with 'counterfeit presentments' of nature, worked in with charred wood and candle-snuffings. But it was not until his father informed John that his destined vocation was the ministry that the art-spirit within him asserted itself in revolt. He implored his father to let him be a painter. One can fancy the feelings of the old Scottish Puritan on hearing this appeal. There was small sympathy with art among the 'respectable classes' during the last quarter of the eighteenth century, when John Thomson was born; and it must have been a sore blow to the worthy minister of Dailly to find a son of his hankering after the frivolous and feckless pursuit of painting in preference to the godly and reputable calling of the ministry. But he was a kindly-hearted man, and his answer to the appeal was to lay his hand gently on the lad's head, and bid him get away to his room, study his verbs, and put all such nonsense as painting out of his thoughts.

To all appearance, John Thomson from that moment acquiesced in his father's views, and accepted his fate. At the age of fourteen he went up to Glasgow University, and a year later migrated to Edinburgh, where his eldest brother Thomas, who had abandoned the ministry for the law, was a student.

Thomas Thomson was a 'youth of parts,' and lived to be famous as the greatest antiquarian lawyer of his time. Even as a student he made his mark, and among his intimate friends were Francis Jeffrey, the future Lord Advocate, and one of the founders of the *Edinburgh Review*, William Erskine, afterwards Lord Kinnedder, William Clerk of Eldin (the original of Darsie Latimer in *Redgawntlet*), and the great Wizard of the North himself, Walter Scott.

Thomas Thomson's 'Sunday Breakfasts' in Bristo Street became notable reunions, and his younger brother John, a quiet, shy, gawky lad, would sit there silently, drinking in the discourse of these nimble wits, for John, though no talker, was an admirable listener.

But all this while, unknown to the good minister of Dailly, John Thomson had been sedulously cultivating in secret the art which he loved. The greater part of his vacations was spent in sketching tours, and he took lessons from Alexander Nasmyth, an artist of some note, and father of the more famous Patrick Nasmyth, often termed 'The British Hobbema.'

Of music, too, John Thomson was almost as passionately fond as of painting. Few amateurs of the day equalled him on violin or flute.

On the 17th of July 1799, having then just completed his twenty-first year, John Thomson was licensed by the Presbytery of Ayr as a preacher of the gospel. Less than a year later, 24th April 1800, he was ordained minister of Dailly, in succession to his father, who died early

in 1799. In the year 1801 he took to himself a wife, and it was thought he would settle down into a staid and sober minister. But art was too strong for theology. So far from curbing his artistic longings, the young minister gave them free scope. Douce elders shook their heads as they discussed the frivolous and worldly tastes of their new pastor. All this painting and fiddling at the manse was nothing short of a scandal. Some, in righteous wrath, forsook the kirk of Dailly, and preferred walking to another kirk, seven miles distant, to sitting under a minister whose heart was more in his easel than his pulpit. Others took upon them to administer wholesome rebuke to their flighty pastor. But John Thomson was a man of humour, and had a way of turning the tables upon his godly monitors which surprised and discomfited them.

On one occasion, at the half-yearly communion in the neighbouring parish of Barr, John Thomson, as the youngest minister of the Presbytery, having officiated first in the impromptu pulpit erected in the churchyard, sat down and gave place to an older minister, as the custom was in those days. 'Looking round upon the rustic congregation,' says Mr William Baird, to whose *Memoir of John Thomson* we must express our indebtedness, 'his artistic eye was arrested by a strikingly picturesque face and figure from the hills—that of a venerable old man, whose long gray locks, light-blue coat, with large brass buttons, knee-breeches, buckles in his shoes, and quaint old three-cornered hat, proclaimed him one of a former century. The temptation was too strong to be resisted, even on so solemn an occasion, and Thomson's pencil and paper were at once in requisition, sketching the physiognomy of douce old John Allan.' This awful act of sacrilege was witnessed by some members of the Presbytery. A council was held, and, though it was decided not to 'make a case of it,' yet the oldest of their number was deputed to call upon the young minister and admonish him severely. He did so, and John Thomson listened to the rebuke and admonition silently, and apparently with much submission—his nervous fingers playing restlessly with his pencil on the table showed, however, that he was deeply agitated by the solemn words that fell from his monitor. The old man, pleased with the young pastor's reverential and penitential air, brought his homily to a close with satisfaction. Imagine his feelings when, instead of the expected expression of contrition, the young minister coolly held up before his astonished eyes a thumb-nail caricature of the senior, and audaciously asked, 'What auld cankered earl do ye think that is?'

There was more smartness and rudeness than wit in that retort, and, *pace* Mr William Baird, we do not think it was a happy example of either the good sense or the good feeling of the Rev. John Thomson.

A far more pleasing story is the following:

We have already mentioned the minister's proficiency as a musician. He played the violin and the violoncello admirably, and for hours in the long winter evenings he would delight his friends with his skill. But the more straitlaced of his parishioners looked upon it as a scandal to his profession that so much of his time should

be spent on what they considered frivolous amusements, and several of the elders were moved to wait upon him for purposes of remonstrance. 'They did so,' says Mr William Baird, 'and were most courteously received by the minister and his wife. Having explained the object of their visit, they proceeded apologetically to refer to the rumours that were floating about in the parish, urging that it was not so much "the big gaucie fiddle" they objected to, as "the wee sinfu' fiddle!" Thomson heard them good-naturedly, and then asked them if they would like to hear a tune. Though not quite prepared for this, the elders made no objections to the proposal; the violoncello was brought into the parlour, and he played a selection of fine old Scotch airs with such pathos and feeling that, as a granddaughter of his has told us, they were fairly melted to tears, and so impressed with what they called its "holy hum," that no more objections were ever raised to his playing either "the big gaucie fiddle" or the "wee sinfu' fiddle!"'

After five years at Dailly, John Thomson, through the influence of his brother Thomas and his fast friend, Walter Scott, was presented by the Marquis of Abercorn to the benefice of Duddingston, two and a half miles from Edinburgh. Here the painter-pastor found himself in a more congenial sphere, within easy reach of that brilliant circle of letters and culture which then made Scotland's capital indeed 'a modern Athens.'

Hitherto Thomson had distributed his paintings and sketches gratuitously among his friends, hardly realising that they had any monetary value. But at Duddingston closer contact with the world of art revealed to him the pleasing fact that his pictures were a marketable commodity. The first money he received for a painting was fifteen guineas. But when the sum was offered him he thought it so much above the value of the picture that he would not accept it, until his friend Williams, the well-known painter of Greek landscape, assured him that the work was worth three times as much as the amount named.

From that time John Thomson had no hesitation in selling his pictures, and for many years his average income from this source was not less than £1800—a very large sum in those days, and a solid proof of the high reputation he held. His industry, however, must have been extraordinary, for the prices he put upon his pictures were not high. For a painting 30 inches in length by 25 to 28 inches in breadth, he asked twenty-five guineas—for one 48 inches by 36, fifty guineas. Some of his wealthy patrons, such as the Duke of Buccleuch, no doubt paid him a higher figure, but to make an average annual income of £1800 he must have turned out at least forty pictures in a year.

It would have been well for his fame, perhaps, if he had been gifted with less facility and rapidity of production. So hurried was he in his work that just before the time for the annual Exhibition at Edinburgh half-a-dozen pictures might sometimes be seen lying out on the grass in front of the manse, that the sun might dry the colours. And yet, with all his hurry, it cannot be said that Thomson was slovenly in his execution. In proof of which, take the

lovely view of Dunluce Castle, reproduced in Mr Baird's biography. That picture was painted for Professor Wilson under the following circumstances.

'Christopher North' had come over on a visit to Duddingston Manse, and expressed a wish to purchase one of the minister's pictures. Thomson had none by him which he thought suitable, 'but,' said he, 'I won't be long in painting you one,' and there and then began, and nearly finished, that fine landscape, whilst the professor sat looking on in mingled wonder and admiration.

And yet, with all his devotion to art, the minister of Duddingston was not neglectful of his pastoral duties; and it is singular that even the 'unco guid' in his own parish, whatever they may have *thought*, never made any open complaints of the secular pursuits which absorbed so much of their pastor's time and thoughts. One of the most notable incidents in his ministry was the admission of Walter Scott as a member of kirk session, and a 'ruling elder' in the Church of Scotland. No mention of this fact is made in Lockhart's Life of Sir Walter. Possibly Scott was in after years unwilling to let the world know of his having been not only a member, but an office-bearer of the church which he subsequently forsook, and apparently avoided all mention of the matter, even to his son-in-law.

Thomson, much as he must have grudged every minute taken from his beloved easel, found time to compose excellent sermons, which had the merit, in the eyes of *some* of his hearers at any rate, of being short. Whenever he was disposed to protract his discourse, however, there was a stern monitor to check him in the person of one of his elders, Louis Cauvin, well-known then as a successful professor of the French language and literature. Cauvin detested long sermons, and being on terms of familiarity with Thomson, adopted a peculiar course to shorten the minister's homilies. He had a front seat in the gallery, facing the pulpit, and, as soon as he thought the sermon had lasted long enough, he would take out his big old-fashioned watch, with its heavy chain and seals, and, leaning over the gallery, gently swing the timepiece to and fro till it attracted the preacher's eye. The hint was invariably taken, and the discourse brought to a close as quickly as decorum would permit.

But there were times when the artist was too strong for the minister. One Sunday, the first, second, and third bells had rung out, and still there was no sign of the pastor. The beadle, old John Richardson (himself a character), hurried to the manse, and, to his horror, found the minister at his easel, painting as if for dear life.

'Do ye no ken, sir,' said the shocked official, 'that the bells are dune ringin', and the folk are a' in the kirk?'

But the minister was so intent on realising the 'effect' he was introducing into his picture that he called out:

'Oh! John, man, just gang and ring the bell for another five minutes, till I get in this bonny wee bit o' sky.'

That same worthy beadle deserves a word or two, for he had a pawky humour. Thomson had to be away one Sabbath, and had engaged a young

country minister to take his place. On his return he asked John how the young man had got on. 'Deed, sir,' said John, 'juist middlin'.' It was guid coorse country wark, ower plain and simple for me. I like thae sermons best that jumbles the judgment and confuses the sense, and 'od, sir, there's naeboddy can dae that sae weel as yoursel'.

A mutilated version of this anecdote, by the way, is given by Dean Ramsay in his 'Reminiscences.'

Of the practical character of the minister's charity the following anecdote will serve as an example.

A poor woman came in sore distress to the manse, and after pouring out her tale of woe, exclaimed:

'Eh! Mr Tamson, wad ye no' put up a bit prayer for me?'

In response to the appeal, the minister slipped five shillings into her hand, and whispered:

'Tak' that, Betty, my guid woman; it's likely to do ye mair guid than any prayers I can put up for ye.'

In such unostentatious charity John Thomson parted with the price of many a picture.

Happy in the exercise of his art, in the sympathy of congenial friends, and in the companionship of a devoted wife, John Thomson's lines seemed indeed to be cast in pleasant places. But such happiness was too good to last. In the spring of 1809 the sudden death of his wife turned sunshine into gloom. But, after a season of great darkness and depression, he found solace again in the art which he loved, and plied his brush more vigorously than ever.

From Edinburgh there came troops of friends to visit him, among them Walter Scott, Francis Jeffrey, Sir Thomas Dick Lauder, Sir David Brewster, Professor Wilson ('Christopher North'), and James Hogg, the Ettrick Shepherd. Casual strangers of distinction, too, visiting 'the modern Athens,' thought it a duty to the genius of the artist-minister to pay a pilgrimage to the Duddingston Manse.

Sir Francis Grant, Sir David Wilkie, William Bell Scott, Mr Edward Horsman, M.P., afterwards Chief Secretary for Ireland (Dizzy's 'superior person'), have all left on record the pleasure they derived from their intercourse with the Scottish landscape-painter. Even the great Turner himself, jealous and boorish as he was, liked a 'crack' with Thomson, and surlily admitted that 'the man could paint.'

In 1813 Thomson married for the second time, under somewhat romantic circumstances. The wealthy widow of Mr Dalrymple, of Fordel, a handsome and accomplished lady, well-known in Edinburgh society, was greatly struck by a painting of the Falls of Foyers, exhibited in the window of a picture-dealer. On asking the artist's name, she learned that it was John Thomson, the minister of Duddingston. She was no mean artist herself, and the poetic feeling in the picture appealed to her so strongly that she longed to know the man who could throw such a subtle beauty into his painting. Soon afterwards she was introduced to the minister. Each was instantly attracted to the other. John Thomson confessed afterwards that the moment he set eyes on

Mrs Dalrymple, he said to himself, 'That woman must be my wife;' and she used to tell her friends, 'We just drew together the first minute we met.'

Thomson was a man of attractive personality—a big, stalwart, upstanding man, jovial, rosy-faced, good-tempered. A capital host, too. Jolly suppers we may be sure those were at the manse on winter evenings, after the curling matches on Duddingston Loch. For the artist-minister was a keen lover of the 'roaring game;' and it was his delight to ask his brother curlers up to the manse when the sports of the day were over, and enjoy with them a merry evening, 'within the limits of becoming mirth.' Not the least charm of these convivial evenings was what Walter Scott called 'Thomson's delightful flute,' and even more delightful violin.

So the world went well with John Thomson, until the year 1840, and then his friends noticed with alarm a sudden falling off in his health. As the months wore on he grew worse, till he was rarely strong enough to leave his room. But nothing, not even the doctor's stern injunctions, could keep him from his beloved easel, and he was putting the finishing touches to a painting of Torthorwald Castle when the brush fell from his paralysed fingers, never to be resumed. A few hours later, conscious that he was dying fast, he asked to be taken to the window, and there propped up with pillows, that he might look once more upon the setting sun. It was a glorious October sunset, and silently the dying artist watched the rich and ruddy tints die out of the western sky—then sank back with a sigh; and before that sun rose again in its splendour John Thomson was dead.

To the end of his life Thomson never claimed to be more than an amateur; but it was no amateur's hand that painted 'Tantallon Castle,' 'The Martyrs' Tombs,' and 'The Bog of Loch-na-Kell, Galloway' (familiar to all readers of Mr S. R. Crockett's romances), 'Ravensheugh Castle,' 'Conway Castle,' 'On the Clyde,' 'Fast Castle,' and a hundred more fine landscapes we could name. Whatever his faults, he must at least be allowed to have been the first Scottish artist who realised on canvas the true grandeur and beauty and poetry of Scottish scenery. Defective as they no doubt often are in draughtsmanship and technique, Thomson's landscapes always impress the imagination by their bold romantic tone—their free and fearless handling of nature. Their colours, indeed, have not stood the test of time, and this is mainly due to his use of what he called 'parritch,' a foundation of flour boiled with vinegar, upon which he worked in his colours. Working so rapidly as he did, he seldom gave the 'parritch' time to thoroughly dry and harden; and though it increased the lustre and richness of the colouring at the time, its ultimate tendency has been to wofully dim and tarnish the brilliancy of the original tints. Hence, those who look now upon Thomson's often dingy and faded canvases are unable to realise the effect which they produced when they came fresh and glowing from the easel, and are apt to think him a grossly overrated painter. But he was not that. His contemporaries justly recognised in him a true, earnest, independent, loving worshipper of nature, who threw feeling and poetry into his landscapes,

which were fresh and striking departures from the stiff and soulless formality which had hitherto characterised the Scottish school of art. He was no slavish imitator of the old or new masters, and though occasionally his resemblance to Turner was remarkable, it cannot be urged that he modelled himself upon that great artist. It was no slur upon Thomson's individuality, though we admit, with Sir James Linton, that it was a high compliment to his art, that one of his pictures a few years ago should have been sold as a Turner at Christie & Manson's, and considered a fine specimen of the master at his best.

A MAN FROM THE CAPE.

By W. PETT RIDGE.

It was an eccentric picture gallery, with pictures painted by men who were young enough to know better, of sprawling ladies in green, scarlet landscapes, and blue angels. The frames formed in themselves a grim attraction to most of the visitors; the catalogue was usually preserved by suburban patrons for the purpose of frightening birds. Yet the gallery was not without attractions on a cold day when the wind cut along from the Green Park, down Piccadilly, racing another wind which was speeding madly along Pall Mall with a slight start in advance towards Waterloo Place.

'It does one good,' said Mr James Marchant, 'to come to a show like this. If I ever go out to the Cape again'—

'Which you won't,' said the young lady.

'And I feel wistful'—

'*Mal du pays*,' suggested the young lady.

'Exactly. Why, then, I shall think of this hideous collection of pictures, and I shall feel reconciled to my lot. The Cape is not all honey, but at any rate you *do* get Nature there. And Nature is always good.'

'I suppose these artists think she can be improved by the introduction of a little novelty.'

'I wouldn't,' said Mr James Marchant, waving his stick round the gallery, 'I wouldn't give two-pence halfpenny for the lot of them.'

'I don't suppose they would care to sell them for less.'

Mr James Marchant laughed good-temperedly, and touched her hand, which happened to be resting on her knee. It was a very pretty hand and very neatly gloved, and there was good excuse for him.

'But there is something,' he said, lowering his voice, 'something in the gallery, Ella, that I would give every penny I have in the world to possess.'

'A picture?'

'Prettier than any picture.'

'Statuary?'

'Better shaped than any statuary.'

'Not disposed of already?'

'I hope not. There is only one difficulty—I am not sure, if I were to make an offer now, that it would be accepted.'

'How shall you find out?'

He rose and adjusted his frock-coat with the manner of a man to whom for some years frock-coats had not been familiar wear. He was a tall, browned-faced man, with a good deal of earnestness in his eyes.

'I shall ask Mrs Beckett.'

'Oh!' she said. She gasped a little before she went on. 'And you—you think my step-mother will be—will be able to advise you in the matter?'

'I think she will.' They walked slowly on the thick carpet to the swing-doors. 'Besides, it's only fair to do so.'

'It seems to me,' she said, rolling up her catalogue very tightly, 'rather an old-fashioned mode of procedure.'

'There is this excuse in my case. Mrs Beckett has an idea, I am afraid, that I have brought back from the Cape untold gold. I want to make her understand that when I say I shall have to work for my living, I really mean it.'

'I am glad,' she said quietly.

'I know that you are, dear. But I suppose parents are different.'

'My parent is.'

'And if she objects, why,' he looked down upon her affectionately, 'I shall just pack you up, Ella, and run off with you.'

'Now,' she said delightedly, 'that is more old-fashioned than ever. I believe it's an idea you have learnt from the Kaffirs. What a wonderful thing travel is for improving the mind!'

'I shall see you to-night?'

'I am not sure,' she said, with her little hand resting for a moment in his. 'I think the invitation is for two only.'

'I have a great mind,' said Mr James Marchant, looking down at her affectionately, 'to kiss you.'

'That is no evidence of a great mind,' she said reprovingly. 'Besides, you are in London now.'

'And don't people kiss in London?'

'They don't kiss *me*, Mr Marchant.'

'I am very glad of that.'

'And people don't talk of kissing at the doors of picture galleries.'

'I am afraid,' said James Marchant apologetically, 'that I have much to learn before I become re-civilised. The Cape makes one forget all one's manners.'

'It has not made you forget your friends,' she said.

'There was one,' he said, as he assisted her into the hansom, 'she was only a small girl'—

'Not old enough to count?'

'Of whom I thought every day of my life out there.'

There were tears in her eyes that challenged the lightness of her good-bye. The small gloved hand was pressed in the big fist of the man from the Cape for one moment, and then he gave the address to the driver.

A bright face with the tears of happiness still there looked through the glass as the hansom drove off, and Mr James Marchant strode with a glad heart away to see a business man in Bedford Street. For men who want to earn money must

force their thoughts away even from the direction of pleasant young women.

It was by great dexterity that at dinner in Duke Street Mansions that night Mr James Marchant contrived to get himself paired with the excellent Mrs Beckett. Mrs Beckett declared herself enchanted; but this was so frequent a declaration on the part of Mrs Beckett that it was held to mean something less than the phrase really meant.

'I should have thought you would have insisted, simply insisted on taking down my dear Madeleine.'

Mrs Beckett fluttered her fan at Mr Marchant in a manner that had in the early seventies been pronounced bewitching.

'I want particularly to speak to you, Mrs Beckett. I want to offer myself'—

'S-s-sh,' said Mrs Beckett mysteriously. 'Not a word. I know exactly what you are going to say. Madeleine, my dear.' She called to a tall, bony damsel just in front of them. 'You haven't shaken hands with dear Mr Marchant. How very remiss of you. The dear girl is so thoughtless; do you know, Mr Marchant, that I declare to goodness I believe she's in love.'

Miss Madeleine received this raillery with a grim smile, and shook hands with Mr Marchant. Miss Madeleine explained that her half-sister Ella had remained at home because she had some writing to do.

'Poor Ella,' said Mrs Beckett, with effusive sympathy, 'poor dear girl. I'm really dreadfully fond of her. You must give me your advice, Mr Marchant, concerning her at dinner. I feel already—forgive me for saying so—I feel already as though you were one of the family.'

Mrs Beckett gave her little cackle of self-approval and general satisfaction, and went on as they seated themselves at table.

'I have noticed it all along, do you know, and I am so delighted. Quite enchanted really. And my influence with the dear girl will make her like you. I dare say you may have thought her a little—what shall I say—cold?—but, as a matter of fact, it has only been—oh, bless my soul, thick soup, please—what is the expression? It has only been—it has only been'—

'Maidenly reserve?' suggested Marchant.

'Pre—cisely! Pre—cisely what I was trying to say. How clever of you, dear Mr Marchant. I can understand now how it was you got on so well in South Africa. And your assertion that you had come home with very little was, I could see, only a pretence to try us.—Yes, sherry, please.'

'I want to speak to you about that, Mrs Beckett. I'm afraid you don't realise what I mean when I say that I haven't brought much home with me.'

'Now, my dear Mr Marchant.'

'You must allow me, please, to tell you exactly my position. Unless I work and earn money, we shan't have'—

'Mr Marchant! This elaborate ruse is one that I have heard of before. A woman like myself doesn't live in this world for—well, a certain number of years for nothing.'

'No,' said Mr Marchant; 'it costs money, I know.'

'That is not at all what I mean. But when

you came back from the Cape a few weeks ago, and hinted that you had only a few hundreds, I could see through it at once. It was—this is a dreadfully slangy expression—too thin. But the dear girl, of course, didn't see through it, and consequently you may feel quite sure that she will love you for yourself alone. That's all you wanted, isn't it?'

'That, certainly, is all that I wanted, but'—
'And, fortunately enough, to confirm my suspicions, I came across a letter addressed to a friend of mine—she didn't know that I saw it, but I managed to do so all the same—from your partner, Burchison.'

'Really?' Mr James Marchant was suddenly interested.

'And Mr Burchison said that you and he had made a pile—such an odd expression, isn't it—of twenty thousand pounds. And he said that he thought you would both stay on for a few years, but as we know *you* sensibly enough came home.'

Mrs Beckett looked triumphantly across at her angular daughter opposite, who was bawling information about the weather to a deaf archdeacon, and then at Marchant. She shook her head waggishly at the man from the Cape.

'Can I see that letter?' he asked sharply.

'Fortunately I have it in my pocket, but I really don't know whether I ought to show it you. You see it is private.'

'Is that why you took it, Mrs Beckett?'

'Come, come, Mr Marchant. Don't be too severe. One has to keep one's eyes open in this world.'

She found the letter with some difficulty—for the pockets in ladies' dresses are remote and difficult of access—and under ambush of his plate, Marchant read it.

'Mrs Beckett,' he said excitedly, 'you have, without knowing it, done me a very great service. Burchison declared to me that he had invested our gains, and that all the money had been lost. It seems from this letter that he has behaved shamefully, and I shall make him disgorge every penny that belongs to me. I shall go back to the Cape by the next boat.'

'This is very unsatisfactory,' declared Mrs Beckett aggrievedly. 'You can't very well get married before next Saturday.'

'The dear girl will wait,' he answered confidently.

'I'm not so sure of that,' said Mrs Beckett with some snappishness. 'Dear Madeleine is not so young as she was.'

'So I should judge. But what has she to do with the affair? Is she to be bride'smaid?'

'Madeleine has been bride'smaid often enough,' said Madeleine's mother. 'This time, providing this money affair of yours comes out right, she will be the bride.'

'Whose bride, Mrs Beckett?'

'Why, bless the man,' cried Mrs Beckett, 'yours.'

'I don't see how that can be managed with convenience. There's a law against bigamy, I believe. Besides, I only want to marry your step-daughter.'

'Ella?' cried Mrs Beckett amazedly.

'If you don't mind.'

Mrs Beckett laid down her fish knife and fork, and stared distractedly around the table at

the other guests. Finally her eyes rested on Madeleine, and she frowned so much at that young lady that Madeleine asked across the table in an audible tone if she were ill.

'Ill?' echoed Mrs Beckett tartly; 'I have uncommonly good cause to be. To think that I have taken all this trouble for the sake of poor Mr Beckett's ridiculous little daughter by his first wife. Why, she isn't worth'—

'Excuse me,' interrupted Marchant promptly; 'you will remember, please, that you are speaking of a lady who is to be my wife.'

'Bah!' said Mrs Beckett.

CONVALESCENCE.

AWAKE, sad world, for Spring has come

With song and laughter sweet,
The billowy meadows break in foam
Of flowers about her feet.

Here where I sit, alone, apart,
I hear her voice again,
The slow blood stirs about my heart
And moves in every vein.

She bids me rise and follow her,
Light foot and heart of song;
Ah! how my feeble pulses stir
That lifeless lay so long!

I come, I come, my foot is light,
My heart beats strong once more;
Sweet Spring, I follow hard thy flight
By mountain, stream, and shore.

The lark sings sweeter overhead
Than e'er before he sung,
And I, who thought that youth was fled
For ever, I am young!

Oh rapture of the bounding blood!
Oh joy of ear and eye!
My life comes like a roaring flood
When I had thought to die.

And never was the world so sweet,
And never Spring so fair,
The primrose shining at her feet,
The stars among her hair.

The bright birds hail in every tree
Her banners green unfurled,
To live is joy enough for me
In such a sunlit world.

D. J. ROBERTSON.

* * TO CONTRIBUTORS.

- 1st. All communications should be addressed to the Editor, 339 High Street, Edinburgh.
- 2d. For its return in case of ineligibility, postage stamps should accompany every manuscript.
- 3d. To secure their safe return if ineligible, ALL MANUSCRIPTS, whether accompanied by a letter of advice or otherwise, should have the writer's Name and Address written upon them in FULL.
- 4th. Poetical contributions should invariably be accompanied by a stamped and directed envelope.

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